

# DOWN TO EARTH

## Knotty Problem of City's Hawker Eviction

By A S M-Nurunnabi

Eviction of city's street hawkers has lately become a controversial issue. Some have expressed the view that when the government and the nation's industrial and service organisations have little or no means to provide many of our qualified and skilled manpower with a job, government could have avoided the opening of the Pandora's Box by embarking on large-scale eviction of city's street hawkers, who represent a snowballing multitude of semi-skilled and unqualified manpower. The hawkers are always finding a way to fend for themselves all by themselves.

It is, therefore, felt wrong to identify them as a menace number one and fix it accordingly in the national priorities. Menace to civic life is not posed by them feeding their dependents by their labour without any institutional financing.

It is further held that in a society where avenues of income, apart from employment, are pathetically limited, any step that might be an additional strain on the economically handicapped section of the population must not be taken without serious thought given to its economic and political consequences.

There are some plain realities. The eviction has affected mainly two classes of people:

Those below the upper middle class down to those in the lowest rung in the economic ladder. They would be denied the opportunity of getting ordinary consumer goods at much lower prices than they have to pay when shopping in the formal public markets.

Since following the eviction, the hawkers have been feeling that they have been left out of any means of earning, there are already a number of law and order incidents in the city.

One common reason for hawkers to be evicted from their unauthorised places is the problem they create for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In fact, the traffic problem has been compounded not by the hawkers alone. For example, the burgeoning growth of rickshaw jamming the streets is a common sight.

The important thing is to recognise the hawker's rights as they have been recognised and institutionalised in most other countries including those in this region. In many a city in this region, there are reportedly special arrangements for floating markets as part of a co-ordinated policy for providing marketing facilities. For example, Pakistan introduced Friday or Jumma Bazaars in the mid eighties in every Mahalla of the big cities — Karachi, Lahore,

Islamabad, Bangkok is also known for its floating boat markets with things on offer at the most competitive price.

A compromise solution can be found out to the problem between the extremes of uncompromising policy of eviction of hawkers and untrammelled freedom of city hawkers to ply their trade. We can learn from the experience from other countries in this region, as indicated above. Hawkers that clutter the pavements is a nuisance to many but to a greater number this can be fun and a true convenience. The point is to see that the hawkers do not choke pedestrian traffic or be a source of obstruction to foot-path users.

Some observers are of the view that this can be achieved without killing their trade, if steps are taken to initiate a process of phasing them out, while a positive scheme is taken up to provide them with alternative means or substitutes in a neatly organised way. Such substitute markets both for hawkers and their classified consumers may be provided in the city's populous localities as part of the overall traffic, urban communication and congestion problem under a policy of co-ordination. Let there be an end to the adoption of ad hocism in tackling this knotty problem.



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (R) meets Libyan President Moammar Gaddafi (L) in the Egyptian Libyan border town of Sidi Barrani, 700 kms from Cairo, Thursday. The two leaders are discussing a solution for the 'Lockerbie crisis' and UN sanctions against Libya. Story on Page 5.

## BNP has introduced neo-autocracy: AL

Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman has said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's government should resign voluntarily for its "miserable failure" to revive the economy and institutionalise democracy in the country.

Talking to UNB, Zillur Rahman brought a series of charges against the BNP, including corruption, politicisation and political persecution. He warned, "If the present situation continues, it will only spell disaster for the whole nation."

He said the Awami League, as a responsible opposition party, has "extended all cooperation to this government to implement the objectives of the anti-autocracy movement by establishing democracy as an institution."

But in nearly three years of its rule, the ruling BNP had reneged on its election promises, ignored the joint-declaration of the Three Alliances and introduced a 'neo-autocracy' to prolong its rule, the Awami League leader alleged.

"We no longer want to cooperate with this undemocratic government... We want to build up tough resistance against it," he said.

If the government does not quit voluntarily, Zillur threatened that the Awami League would go for all out agitation with the support of the people to force the government to step down.

"We think it is the time for a decisive agitation. But whatever

we do, it will be within the constitutional framework," he said.

In reply to a question, the AL general secretary said, an elected government cannot be called democratic unless it shows respect to democratic values and parliamentary norms and practices.

"The BNP government is a glaring example that an elected government may not always be a democratic government," he said, adding that the main essence of democracy is the rule of law.

"But this government has failed to ensure the rule of law, separate the judiciary from the executive and scrap black laws, including the Indemnity Ordinance," he observed.

Zillur also alleged that the ruling party resorted to political victimisation of the opposition by abusing the Anti-Terrorism Act. He said so far, 302 cases were disposed of under this Act and all were against the members of the Awami League and its front organisations.

On the Awami League's views about future elections under a caretaker government, he said his party has not yet raised the demand officially. "But it is our firm conviction that elections cannot be free and impartial under this government," he added.

He said there were a lot of irregularities and violations of election rules at different tiers of voting under this government — from the college union elections to some parliamentary elections.

## Solidarity Day tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The National Revolution and Solidarity Day will be observed tomorrow.

The day is a public holiday. The offices of the national dailies will remain closed on the day.

The ruling BNP and other political parties have drawn up elaborate programmes.

The BNP will hold a public meeting at the Democracy Square in the capital at 3 pm. Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, her cabinet colleagues and other central leaders will address the meeting.

National and party flags will be hoisted at the central and branch offices across the country at 6 am. Munajat, and laying of wreaths at the mazar of late President Ziaur Rahman and offering of special prayers are also planned.

## Jubo League worker shot dead

From Our Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 5: One Jubo League worker was shot dead while several others were injured in gunfire and cocktail explosions in and around the local Awami League office at about eight tonight.

Farhad Hussain Tutul, 22, who received injuries, died on way to the hospital. Several injured persons have been admitted to city hospitals and clinics.

The incident is believed to have taken place as a result of infighting between the Jubo League and the Chhatra League reportedly involving two Awami League MPs.

# The Midnight File

## Omar Sharif leaves hospital

LONDON, Nov 5: Actor Omar Sharif left a London hospital on Friday, 11 days after undergoing heart surgery. The 61-year-old star of 'Dr Zhivago' and 'Lawrence of Arabia' had a single bypass operation, carried out by Sir Magdi Yacoub at Harefield Hospital, west London on October 25. "He will spend a couple of weeks in London so he is near the hospital in case he needs us before returning to his home in France," a hospital spokeswoman said anonymously, reports AP.

## Italian film director Gori dead

ROME, Nov 5: Mario Cecchi Gori, a leading Italian film producer whose credits included the Oscar-winning 'Mediterraneo,' died Friday. His press spokesman said he appeared to have suffered a heart attack. Cecchi Gori, 73, was the second figure from the Italian cinema to die this week. Film director Federico Fellini died Sunday. Cecchi Gori suddenly fell ill in his office and was rushed to Rome's Polyclinic Hospital after the apparent heart attack, said his press spokesman, Enrico Lucherini, reports AP.

## PM: DU teachers awaiting trial

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The activists of students bodies like the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) told The Daily Star that the militant Ilias Group of the Jatyaabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was trying to get into the campus taking advantage of the situation.

Ilias Ali, the former general secretary of the JCD who played a key role during the anti-autocracy movement, is now in jail awaiting trial. He was arrested last year following the September 92 murders of two JCD workers on the Dhaka University campus. The two students — Ashraf Alam Mamun and Mohammad Hossain — were killed during serious infighting among two factions of the JCD, one led by Ilias and another by Ratan. After the incident Ilias fell out of favour with the central BNP leadership and has been charged with the two murders.

Last Monday, one Jinnatul Islam Jinnah, a student of the JCD and a central leader of the JCD, was killed at the Registrar's Building by some gunmen, reportedly belonging to a faction of the JCD. Three University employees were also seriously injured during the attack.

The police till yesterday had failed to make any progress regarding this case. During the last two and a half years of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's rule, 16 persons were killed on the DU campus of whom five were victims of JCD infighting.

Most of the killings, according to knowledgeable sources, originated from fights over the sharing of extortion money and participation in tender bids for construction works or supply of university equipment and provisions.

The government tried to foil our every meeting by imposing Section 144 or by lobbing tear gas shells," he told a public meeting at the Bohoria North Islam Junior High School ground here this afternoon.

The JP acting chairman said the BNP is a government of 'failed promises'. Before going to power, it promised a jute price of Tk 500 per maund but now the growers do not even get their production cost, he added.

Barrister Maudud said the BNP government has destroyed the economy of the country. "Not a single industry was set up during the tenure of Begum Khaleda Zia. Rather, hundreds of industries were either closed down or denationalised," he said.

## Ishaq

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both given an equal chance of being the party's final choice.

Sharif said the PML and its ally which has 75 seats in parliament and controls the North West Frontier Province as well as Baluchistan would win because it had the "largest vote bank."

The PPP and a splinter PML-Junejo together run the government in Punjab, the politically most important province, while the other key province of Sindh is controlled by PPP alone.

Ishaq Khan's nomination had been backed by PML-Junejo although a powerful group within Bhutto's own party had opposed him because of his 1990 dismissal of her government when he was President.

Ishaq Khan subsequently allied with Bhutto after his relations with Sharif became strained when the former Premier tried to clip his powers to dissolve parliament.

He tried and failed to become the joint candidate of the People's Democratic Front, which groups both the PPP and PML-Junejo, but has now thrown his weight behind Leghari.

Ishaq Khan's major role in paving the way for Pakistan's October general elections was praised by Leghari. He said the former President had made a 'great sacrifice' when he resigned with Sharif in July to call fresh elections in an army-brokered settlement of a political crisis which had paralysed Pakistan politics.

The crisis was caused by a prolonged power tussle between Sharif and Ishaq Khan.

## JS session

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The Indemnity Repeal Bill and the proposals to table a bill to ban communal parties. The issue of campus violence following the spate of recent incidents in the Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar, Chittagong, Dhaka and Islamic Universities is also expected to dominate the sitting of the House.

The session is also due to take up some fresh bills for consideration including one on framing of new insolvency laws and amendments to the Companies Act of 1913.

The last session of the Sangsad that sat for only 16 days witnessed some stormy debates between the ruling party and the Awami League-led Opposition. It also adopted seven bills, a record number, considering the short duration of the session.

Such disputes have become an autumn ritual between teachers upholding France's hard-won separation of church and state, and the desire by devout Muslims to observe their religion.

## Just a propaganda, says Kiev

## Ukraine's N-arms may cause a disaster any time: Russia

MOSCOW, Nov 5: Ukraine's aging nuclear weapons could cause a disaster worse than the Chernobyl explosion unless their withdrawal to Russia begins by next year, Russia's foreign minister said Friday, reports AP.

Literally over the last few hours, we received very disturbing signals from our Ukrainian colleagues regarding the technical condition of a number of missiles, Andrei Kozyrev said before leaving for the Black Sea port of Odessa, where he met with his Ukrainian counterpart, Anatoly Zlenko.

Kozyrev responded angrily. Presidential aide Anton Budeiko accused Kozyrev of propaganda, and scaring the world for the sake of getting the missiles.

"All warheads are under the control of the same specialists who controlled them in the former Soviet Union. No questions arose at that time," Budeiko told The Associated

Press.

Ukraine's 176 long-range missiles make up the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal.

The former Soviet republic has pledged to become nuclear-free but has been reluctant to part with its arsenal. Ukrainian leaders have sought unspecified security guarantees and financial compensation from the West and Russia.

Ukrainian Defense Ministry spokesman Alexander Kluban said the warheads are in the technical state in which they should be, in keeping with storage technology. This state does not cause any concern.

But Kozyrev said the withdrawal of the weapons to Russia for dismantling must start by Jan 1 unless Ukraine wants a stronger than Chernobyl nuclear disaster caused by purely technical reasons.

Nuclear weapons stationed on Ukrainian territory can be safely kept only for another 24

months. After that, nobody would guarantee their safety, he said.

In remarks reported by the ITAR-Tass and Interfax news agencies, Kozyrev said his talks with Zlenko would mostly be devoted to Ukraine's nuclear disarmament.

## 20 injured as football fans clash in Savar

SAVAR, Nov 5: At least 20 people were injured, two of them seriously, when some fans of the Kallikori Ekata Sangha and the Dharendra Mission Tarun Sangha clashed at the venue of the match here today, eye witnesses said, reports UNB.

The clash ensued when a player was beaten by a volunteer, during the match, played at the Rajashan High School football ground this afternoon.

## Discard politics of gains: Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia underlined the need for keeping the younger generation within the fold of the party through the politics of ideology, principle and development programmes, reports BSS.

Begum Zia said "our politics aims at the welfare of the people but not for realising self interest. So, politics of gains must be shunned."

"The Prime Minister was addressing the newly elected office-bearers of Rajendra College and other colleges of Faridpur district and leaders and workers of different political parties of Bhanga thana of the district who joined BNP yesterday at her Sugandha office."

She said the politics of slo-fake travel tax receipts seized at Ctg airport

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Nov 5: Chittagong airport customs seized fake foreign travel tax receipts from some outgoing passengers.

Customs officials alleged that an organised gang belonging to a section of travel agencies was involved in the racket.

Most of the fake travel tax receipts were found with the passengers going to Middle East countries.

Those passengers frequently face problem at the airport during routine check up of their travel documents though they paid the travel tax to the respective travel agencies, officials informed.

Around 50 such fake travel tax receipts were seized by the customs officials in the past one month.

## Cooperatives

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movement was recognised as one of the strategies for poverty alleviation in the developing nations.

President Biswas further said the government had taken up effective steps for infusing dynamism into the cooperative movement which would be integrated with the agricultural and socio-economic development programmes for women at the village level.

In another message last night, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said for a resource constrained country like Bangladesh, the cooperative movement is a beacon in meeting the basic needs of a poor and low-income population.

She said cooperatives have a vital role in eradicating poverty, developing human resources and creating scope for employment.

She wished all success of the Cooperative Day.

## 153 BCL leaders demand release of Auranga

By Staff Correspondent

One hundred and fifty-three leaders of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (M-I) yesterday, in a joint statement, demanded release of all political prisoners including parliamentarian Hemayetullah Auranga.

The Awami League-backed student's organisation alleged that the government, in an autocratic manner, was harassing its activists all over the country.

BCL leaders attending the 3-day extended meeting of their executive body in the capital, said in the statement yesterday that the Prime Minister herself had revived the case against Auranga for personal and political reasons. They termed the case "motivated and fabricated."

Meanwhile, hearing of the murder case against Auranga resumes today in the court of the Additional District and Sessions Judge.

Auranga is charged with the murder of an Army intelligence corporal.



The Bangladesh Communist Party (CPB) brought out a procession in the city yesterday commemorating the October Revolution. — Star photo

## Killings at CMCH cafeteria 'Dhakaia Akbar' held

By Staff Correspondent

Another person allegedly involved in the October 17 killings at the Chittagong Medical College was arrested in the city yesterday.

Akbar, better known as Dhakaia Akbar, was arrested by the Detective Branch (DB) in a special drive at Ghora Shahid Lane under Lalbagh thana.

Police alleged that Akbar was a hired killer involved in the indiscriminate firing at the Chittagong Medical College cafeteria that left one Dr Mizanur Rahman and two others killed and several others injured.

Akbar, presently under interrogation of the DB, was also wanted for murder and other criminal charges.

Earlier, police in Chittagong arrested nine other suspects of the CMCH killings.

In another drive, police arrested one other wanted terrorist — Nazim — from the city's Sayedabad area. Meanwhile, Mirpur police, acting on the confessional statement of a suspect, recovered two bodies from Rugganj on the outskirts of the city. The

## Madonna is too hot even for steamy Rio

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RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 5: It seems Madonna is too hot even for steamy Rio, reports AP.

Two courts ordered restrictions on the material girl's risque "Girly Show," which comes to the city of carnival on Saturday; no Brazilian flag, and no fans under 14.

Rio's Juvenile Court late Thursday raised the minimum age for those attending the show from 10 to 14. Organizers promised to refund the tickets of underage fans.

## Head scarves

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The insistence on wearing the scarves prompted a 24-hour strike by the school's teachers Oct 12 in protest of what they see as an attempt to proselytise other Muslim students.

Such disputes have become an autumn ritual between teachers upholding France's hard-won separation of church and state, and the desire by devout Muslims to observe their religion.